

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-6 are pending in this paper. Claim 7 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 5, and 6, which are independent, are hereby amended. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification, specifically at paragraphs [0108] and [0119].

No new matter has been introduced. Changes to the claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,581,207 to Sumita (hereinafter, merely "Sumita") and in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,169,543 to Wehmeyer (hereinafter, merely "Wehmeyer").

III. RESPONSE TO REJECTIONS

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

“...correcting means for correcting and adding variable notations in the search keyword space.” (Emphasis added)

These features are described in the Specification as:

[0108] The search keyword space correction section 261 corrects the generated search keyword space 43. **The correcting process specifically involves adding, as search-related keyword data, variable notations of the search keyword 41 making up the search keyword space 43 or of the search-related keyword data.** As examples of the variable notations to be added, "violin" and "biolin" are considered equivalent, and so are "A. Smith" and "A Smith." (emphasis added)

[0119] In step S124 of FIG. 16, the search keyword space correction section 261 corrects any variable notations in the search keyword space 43 generated by the search keyword space generation section 253.

Applicants respectfully submit that Sumita and Wehmeyer, taken either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the above identified features of claim 1. Specifically, nothing in either reference discloses or suggests correcting means for correcting and adding variable notations in the search keyword space, as recited in claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable.

Since independent claims 5 and 6 are similar, or somewhat similar, in scope to claim 1, they are allowable.

IV. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the

invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Similarly, because Applicants maintain that all claims are allowable for at least the reasons presented hereinabove, in the interests of brevity, this response does not comment on each and every comment made by the Examiner in the Office Action. This should not be taken as acquiescence of the substance of those comments, and Applicants reserve the right to address such comments.

CONCLUSION

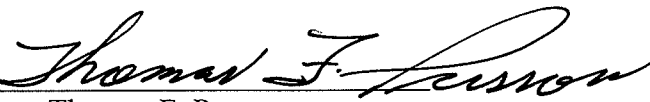
In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosure in the cited references, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the references providing the basis for a contrary view.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance and request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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